

CHELTENHAM QUAKER

JANUARY 2019

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A thought from Advices and Queries No.26

Do you recognise the needs and gifts of each member of your family and household, not forgetting your own? Try to make your home a place of loving friendship and enjoyment, where all who live or visit may find the peace and refreshment of God's presence.

CALENDAR (All of these meetings are at the Meeting House unless otherwise stated.)

JANUARY			
Thursday	3	6.30-9 pm	Mid-Week Meeting: Reflections (see below)
Sunday	6	10.30	Meeting for Worship
Thursday	10	7-9 pm	Mid-Week Meeting - Action Group (see below)
Sunday	13	10.30	Meeting for Worship
Thursday	17	6.30-9 pm	Mid-Week Meeting - Words, God & Light contd. (see below)
Sunday	20	10.30 noon	Meeting for Worship Meeting for Learning: Jo Teakle - Mysticism in the Poems of Mary Birkett Card (see below)
Thursday	24	7-9 pm	Mid-Week Meeting - Action Group (see below)
Sunday	27	10.30 noon	Meeting for Worship/Sale of Fair Trade Products Worship sharing
FEBRUARY			
Sunday	3	10.30 noon	Meeting for Worship Local Meeting

Children are always welcome in our Sunday Meetings for Worship. On second and fourth Sundays children can go to the children's room where they will be joined by two of the Children's Meeting volunteers.

Items for inclusion in the next newsletter should be sent to the editorial email address or by post to the editor

Cal Anton-Smith by
Monday 21st JANUARY at the latest

Web address: <http://www.cheltenhamquaker.org.uk/newsletters.php>

***** **EVENTS** *****

JAN 3rd - MID-WEEK MEETING: REFLECTIONS - a chance to pause and reflect as one year ends and another begins

Please join Ginny and David on Thursday Jan 3rd for a time of quiet reflection on your memories of 2018 and your hopes and perhaps anxieties about the year ahead.

In quietness we can choose from suggestions to help us say goodbye, make peace with our regrets and celebrate our blessings; prompts to help us look forward with hope; and a tree to dress with greetings for absent friends.

We will close with a short Lectio Divina (a simple guided meditation) on our experiences from the evening.

No "faith" needed! Please feel encouraged to bring family or friends who don't do unguided silence or spiritual stuff.

Come at 6:30 for bring-and-share supper, or from 7:30 for the Reflections. Finishes 9pm.

JAN 20th - MEETING FOR LEARNING: Jo Teakle - Mysticism in the Poems of Mary Birkett Card

Jo will lead an exploration of some of her ancestor's spiritual poems from the late 18th century - the age of sensibility and Jane Austen. Mary Birkett Card was a Dublin Quaker who wrote poems against the slave trade. Jo would like to explore whether her poems, written within the literary conventions of her day yet also grounded in the Quaker spirituality of her time, can still speak to Friends today. The poems in this session are mystical, connected with the natural world, and spring from Mary's friendships with two other young Anglo-Irish Quaker women, Debby Watson and Hannah Wilson Forbes.

MID-WEEK MEETINGS take place on the **1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month - 6.30pm to 9pm**

At our last Meeting in December discussing "God, Words and Us" was so thought-provoking, we felt there is much more potential in this area for further discussion. It has therefore been decided to continue our reading of this book and share further thoughts on the 17th January 2019.

People who are interested are welcome to join us, even if they perhaps missed our discussion in December.

There is a list of future dates of scheduled mid-week Meetings (first and third Thursdays of the month) on the notice board in the Tea Room. There are still some gaps where Friends might like to suggest topics for discussion or other suggestions if they wish - please feel free to write ideas on the sheet or speak to Jo Joy or Joseph Fuller for details.

MID-WEEK MEETING - ACTION GROUP 2nd and 4th Thursdays 7- 9pm

Action Group

We hope to find practical ways to enact Good both locally and in a wider context and we aim to encourage (give courage to each other!) and support each other in our spirit-guided action. We hope to embark on lots of short and long-term projects and what we do will evolve with the leadings of the group.

It is not our intention to hector and lecture people, we want all our actions to be positive and constructive. We hope our projects will spark thoughts and conversations beyond the Meeting House.

We will have snacks and drinks through the evening and a 30 minute meeting for worship to bring our time together to a close.

Both regular attenders and those new to Quakers are all very welcome.

JANUARY CHARITY COLLECTION - FRIENDS OF HLEKWENI

This charity was originally set up to support the work of the Quaker-run Friends Rural Training Centre at Hlekweni, near Bulawayo which, from 1967-2014, provided post-school training in vital occupational skills such as agriculture, building, early years education, and sewing, underpinned by Quaker values of equality, sustainability and peace. Through the generosity of many people, hundreds of trainees were helped.

Now the UK-based charity supports education and peace-building in Zimbabwe, especially, but not exclusively, in the areas around Bulawayo and in wider Matabeleland by helping a wider range of schools, supporting individual students, encouraging and training teachers in peace building, supporting school-based feeding schemes and the relief of hardship in selected cases.

More information can be found on their website friendsofhlekweni.org.uk. Donations can be sent to Friends of Hlekweni, c/o The Quaker centre, 1 Oakley Gardens, Downhead Park, Milton Keynes MK15 9BH by cheque made out to Friends of Hlekweni (not FoH) or through the website.

Friends who are taxpayers are encouraged to send donations directly to the charity, using Gift Aid or a charity voucher (CAF, Charities Trust, etc) possibly adding a note to say that they belong to Cheltenham Quaker Meeting.

NOTES FROM DECEMBER LOCAL MEETING

AM Records Team: Records of Transfer - Cheltenham Meeting Elders Minutes dated 2003-2007 have been transferred to the Area Meeting Record Store at Gloucester Meeting House.

Nominations

Elders: Margaret Sheldrick has asked to lay down being an Elder on 31 December 2018.

Co-Clerks: Dorothy Carson has asked to lay down being a Co-Clerk with immediate effect. There are four remaining co-clerks, Dinah Clements, Alison Crane, Tim Howarth and Rowland Carson

Correspondence Clerk: Rowland Carson will be Correspondence Clerk.

Lettings Office Alison Crane as Joint Lettings Officer until the end of the Triennium, December 2020, and Virginia Pawlyn as Joint Lettings Officer for a trial period of 6 months from the beginning of January 2019.

Sunday Duties Rota Compiler: Helen Pemberton until the end of the Triennium.

Hub meeting Alwyn Burton presented a report. It was suggested that Elders or Pastoral Friends nominate a representative from their groups to attend Nominations meetings on a 3- monthly basis to add their discernment.

Finance Report Tim Howarth presented a report. The builders were asked to continue with phases 2 and 3 of the building works as soon as they can after completion of the first phase. Friends are encourage to contribute donations, particularly to cover items not included in the building budget such as furnishings. A list of costs of particular items will be prepared.

Peace Messenger Report Cal Anton-Smith reported on Remembrance Day, the fundraising initiative for Journeyman Theatre's production on domestic violence "Rock and a Hard Place" and the Sanctuary Everywhere programme in which she stressed the central message that meetings should work with and support existing groups rather than reinventing the wheel.

NOTES FROM DECEMBER AREA MEETING

Deaths

Mario van Boeschoten (Nailsworth meeting) died on 20 November.

Chris Chamberlain (Forest of Dean meeting) died on 2 December.

Applications for Membership

Ellie Fuller (Cheltenham). Her Supporting Friends will be Rowland Carson (Cheltenham) and Pat Beard (Cirencester). Nicola Mÿller (Nailsworth). Supporting Friends to be decided

Resignations

Andrew Holding (Cheltenham) and Wendy Lloyd-Sweet (Cirencester).

Transfer in

David and Ginny Heffernan (Cheltenham)

Nominations:

Laying down of appointments

Leslie Tether and Paul Castle (both Painswick), Margaret Sheldrick (Cheltenham), Val Kirby (Nailsworth) and Sue le Fleming (Cirencester) as elders. Judy Roles (Cheltenham) as Quaker representative on the Gloucestershire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education.

New appointments

Jennifer Longbourne (Cirencester), Anne Knight-Elliott (Cheltenham) and Jane Samuels (Nailsworth) to attend the QPSW conference "Journeys of Witness" at Swanwick from 22 to 24 March 2019.

David Nash (Cirencester) to attend the conference of the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations at Woodbrooke from 8 to 10 March 2019.

Painswick Meeting - Maureen Rowcliffe-Quarry, Terry Robinson and Clement Jewitt to serve as elders for the remainder of the current triennium.

Nailsworth Meeting - Jenny Daisley and Alison Richards to serve as elders until the end of the current triennium.

News of Meetings:

Stroud Meeting has held a shared lunch with the nearby Christian Scientist congregation. The interfaith week at Leyhill went well; and may lead to the creation of a Peace Garden at the prison. Mary Brown's book *The Undiscovered Country* has been published.

Nailsworth's celebration of the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War included a banner across the two buildings beside the meeting house. Several local schools contributed. There is a plan to perform Bach's St John Passion on 14 April next year.

Cheltenham's mid-week meetings continue to thrive. The building works in the Meeting House continue, but should shortly be finished. The meeting took part in the Remembrance Day service and laid a wreath with red and white poppies.

Forest held an afternoon of 'games' (Jennifer Kavanagh's 'Journey Home' and the 'Prayer Game') which 9 Friends had enjoyed. These had included 2 young Friends who made a considerable contribution.

Gloucester had a *Sock Sunday* on 25 November, with a well-attended all-age meeting for worship, in aid of local homeless people.

Sustainability Gathering, Swanwick, 19 to 21 October

Joseph Fuller and Sara Keene attended the gathering. The gathering took place a week after the publication of the IPCC report which warns that we have only 12 years to avoid catastrophic climate change. The report added urgency to the gathering and forced Friends to start facing up to difficult truths. Friends were reminded of some of the many sustainability initiatives, national and local, in which we can engage. Many individual Friends in Area Meeting are deeply committed to action on sustainability and climate change.

It was felt that the Area Meeting could do more. Clerks were asked to convene a meeting of interested Friends to consider the matter further.

Rock and a Hard Place - play on domestic violence by Journeyman Theatre

Three events are to take place between 23rd February and 9th March

Meeting for Sufferings

Colin Brown drew attention to BYM's strategic priorities: Trustees say that we should aim for "*a simple church supported by a simple charity to reinvigorate Quakerism.*" One priority is to simplify our structures and practices; too many committees and too many jobs. But simplifying can throw up difficult issues, seen in the recent laying down of the BYM Sustainability Group and the proposed laying-down of the Committee on Clerks.

Another priority concerns "*speaking out*". Friends have spoken out on a wide range of topics recently. The statement on investment in firms involved in Israeli settlements in the West Bank attracted a lot of media attention.

The project to support the play *Rock and a Hard Place* has been welcomed by other Area Meetings.

Sanctuary Meetings

Cheltenham, Nailsworth and Painswick have become Sanctuary Meetings. Some meetings are still considering the possibility, while others have decided that they will continue to work to help refugees and asylum seekers (including through local Churches Together organisations) without formally becoming Sanctuary Meetings.

Area Meeting has agreed to become a Sanctuary Meeting. Work at Area Meeting level might focus on liaising with GARAS and other national organisations about areas of need and campaign priorities, and keeping local meetings informed; and organising training. This would complement the work of local meetings, and help to make it more effective.

Hebron International Resource Network (HIRN)

Ann Davison (Forest of Dean LM) spoke of her concern for Palestinians in the West Bank area of Hebron. She is one of 8 people working as the UK Friends of Hebron International Resource Network. HIRN carries out poverty relief and educational projects to support the most threatened Palestinian communities in the West Bank. It was agreed to support Ann's application for a Relief Grant to fund school transportation for girls aged from kindergarten upwards from Bedouin communities.

All-age Area Meeting - July 14th

Meetings and Friends are asked to publicise the All-age Meeting and to encourage young people and families to come, and to consider whether they could organise an activity on the theme of Living our Beliefs for the meeting.

Next Area Meeting Sunday 10 February 2019 at Cheltenham Friends Meeting House.